

2004 Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program



Customer Focus

Block Island is home to over 40 rare and endangered plant and animal species. One of these is the federally-listed, endangered American burying beetle (*Nicrophorus americanus*). Block Island supports the only remaining natural population on the entire east coast. The beetles depend heavily on the carcasses of large grassland birds as a source of food for their larvae. The pastures, hay fields, and other agricultural grasslands of Block Island are of specific interest as it is in these grasslands, most notably on the southern end of the island, where the majority of the Island's burying beetles are breeding.

NRCS is currently involved in a restoration project in the heart of American burying beetle territory. The project is happening at the Black Rock Farm. The farm, owned by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and the Town of New Shoreham, is a mix of pasture, hayland, shrubland, and wetlands. Here, with assistance from the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, grassland expansion, through shrub clearing and warm season grass planting, in addition to routine grassland maintenance through mowing, is taking place. These efforts should not only improve habitat for American burying beetles, but for American woodcocks, savannah sparrows and other grassland species, as well.

The Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have established a population monitoring protocol. An upward trend in beetle populations has been noted in areas where habitat restoration has occurred on Block Island. Hopefully, the American burying beetle's population will expand even further as a result of this improvement project.

Rhode Island Summary

Overview

In Rhode Island, strong interest and participation in the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) continued through 2004. Applications requesting Federal cost-share funds totaling 2.3 million were submitted by 14 landowners. NRCS staff developed and approved nine WHIP conservation plans and contracts totaling \$1.1 million.

Accomplishments

The dollar value of partner contributions totaled \$4.1 million. Rhode Island received the most funding for WHIP nationwide.

Program Benefits

Program funding, is providing landowners with financial resources to improve wildlife habitat, as well as creating partnerships in Rhode Island that can provide them with the best technical expertise available. All nine contracts will encourage the wildlife to return and have a positive impact on the watersheds involved.

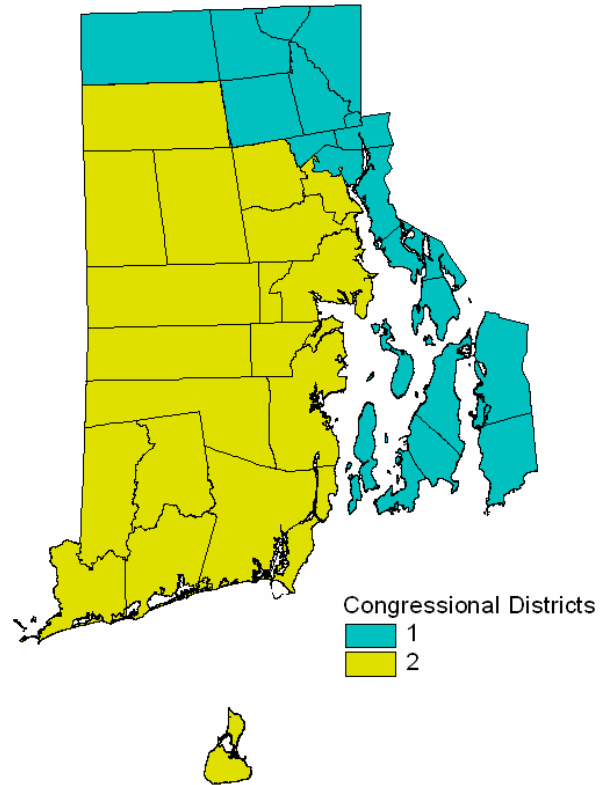


Photo, courtesy of US Fish
& Wildlife Service

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Rhode Island's WHIP Dollars and Contracts by Congressional District



Rhode Island WHIP Dollars and Contracts by Congressional District

Fiscal Year 2004

Cumulative Total (98-04)

Congressional Districts	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts
District 1	\$448,455	5	\$780,227	25
District 2	\$576,545	4	\$861,903	24
State Totals	\$1,025,000	9	\$1,642,130	49

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